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Contact: Robin Winchell (202) 225-4031

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon (D-LA) joined Rep. Heath Shuler of North Carolina and over 80 of his colleagues in Congress yesterday in introducing commonsense immigration enforcement legislation. The bipartisan Secure America through Verification and Enforcement (SAVE) Act is a three-part plan to drastically reduce illegal immigration through stricter border security, employer verification, and interior enforcement.

"Illegal immigration is a threat to our communities and a burden on our local governments. We must do something to solve this problem," said Rep. Melancon. "It is estimated that over 12 million people are currently here illegally, and thousands more are coming in every week. Americans are demanding a solution, and Congress must act now.

"The SAVE Act will stem the tide of illegal immigration through several commonsense measures. It will put 8,000 new border control agents at our border.

"It will require employers to verify that the workers they hire are in this country legally, through a free and simple program that is already available from the Department of Homeland Security. The logic is simple: if illegal workers can't get a job in the U.S., they will stop trying to come here illegally."

"Finally, the SAVE Act will increase cooperation between federal immigration officials and local law enforcement officers so they can more effectively find and detain illegal immigrants. State and local law enforcement often already know where to find these illegal residents, and they arrest criminals who are here illegally every day. The SAVE Act will help the feds work with local police to find and detain these illegal immigrants so they can be sent back to their home countries.

"The SAVE Act is a serious response to the illegal immigration crisis in our country, and I will work with my colleagues to get it passed by Congress."

Click [here](#) for a fact sheet on the SAVE Act. The SAVE Act includes the following provisions:

Hire 8,000 New Border Patrol Agents. The SAVE Act addresses border security by increasing manpower and making needed technological and infrastructure improvements on America's northern and southern borders. The bill would increase Customs and Border Patrol agents by 8,000, utilize new technology and fencing to secure the border, and expand specialized enforcement programs. The SAVE act also includes provisions to use financial incentives, including student loan repayments and bonuses, to recruit new border patrol agents.

Expands the E-Verify program to provide all employers with the tools they need to ensure that their employees are here legally. The E-Verify program is a simple, effective, and free program that allows employers to efficiently and quickly ensure that the people they hire are legally allowed to work in the U.S. The program will be phased-in over four years, beginning with the federal government, federal contractors, and employers with over 250 employees. Smaller businesses would begin using the system in a graduated manner.

Provides tools to enforce existing federal laws. The SAVE Act also provides the tools, resources and infrastructure necessary to enforce existing federal laws and penalize offenders. It increases the investigative abilities of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with more agents and more training. Additionally, it increases (ICE)'s ability to coordinate with state and local law enforcement to apprehend illegal immigrants. Finally, the SAVE Act creates new infrastructure for the detention, processing and removal of illegal aliens by increasing detention

facility capacity, and streamlining judicial processes.